Executive Summary

This project is primarily adjacent and running parallel to Interstate 69. This Grant County area encompasses 4 townships. Van Buren Township is primarily a farming area north of State Road 18. Monroe township is primarily residential and small business south of State Road 18. The area in Monroe Township that will be serviced by fiber is a potential development area that is currently business and residential. Mill township is where the Industrial Park is to be served by this project, it is on the outskirts of Gas City. Mill township and Jefferson township area have seen a large portion of Grant County’s growth and are expected to grow even more. Our fiber route along St. Rd 22 passes a 21 acre area zoned as commercial for future development. The businesses in the area where the fiber is proposed need the added bandwidth and expandability to keep up with the future technological needs of their businesses. The southern most township is Jefferson Township, the Mississinewa river runs through the unserved area, this makes fiber deployment extremely expensive, wireless is without a doubt the best solution for this area.

This deployment is engineered and designed with the future in mind. As some wireless operators often look for tall towers to cover large areas they lose effective bandwidth. Even added power does not solve the issue of diminished bandwidth at locations further from the towers as the noise created from more power at other towers only amplifies the noise level making the signal even worse. To deliver the bandwidth effectively the transmitted signals need to be close to the customers with antennas pointed to the customers and not out toward the horizon creating noise levels that diminish effectiveness of the signals miles away. Our network has been designed to have smaller coverage areas for each tower with more towers situated usually within 2 or 3 miles of each other.

Eastern Indiana will service 194 unserved households plus 34 businesses, a National Register, Historic home site available for public viewing (The Jenkins House) along with 150 seasonal campsites wirelessly. In the upgrades to the middle mile backbone an additional 72 households will be upgraded from (10/1 or less) to 25/5 service. This upgrade of the 72 households is not included in the project costs. There will be 33 fiber passings up to 1 G/1G connection with 17 of these being businesses. The project will include the Gas City Industrial park with an additional 11 potential Gig/Gig connections. The project will have a total of 355 potential connections (including yearly campsites) of at least 25/5 that are in unserved blocks or directly adjacent to the unserved block that we have verified do not have internet of at least 10/1. The project will easily be completed in early 2021. The wireless will be largely completed before December 2019 with the fiber route being completed by June 2021. Our project is especially advantageous to the farming community; it touches several farm grain leg structures, each of these farm businesses and farm families get free internet of 50 meg or more. This system helps them keep up with all technology necessary for today’s farming operations.

Eastern Indiana Wifi Inc. is owned and operated by two brothers who saw the need and began the company 14 years ago with a plan to improve the area with better broadband. It has not been their desire to necessarily grow geographically, but to provide the best most affordable broadband to their community and school system. The communities that Eastern Indiana Wifi Inc. is servicing have been very supportive of our work and have partnered with us. The
principles Gregg and Randy Ballinger live within 7 miles of the entire project and own a Golf Course and a Hardware in the community and know the area and the people. The two brothers have built a 12,000 sq. ft hardware and a 36 hole golf complex since 1983 along with a 12 mile fiber project in 2016, demonstrating the capacity to complete a project of this scale.

Eastern Indiana Wifi Inc. proved to be the solution for Eastbrook School System; they were selected to provide both bandwidth as well as backbone for the three campuses between Van Buren and Upland Indiana, necessitating approximately 12 miles of Eiwifi fiber buildout.

With Interstate 69 being along the unserved areas, the opportunity for growth is tremendous if there is affordable reliable broadband. The real potential is not only because of the location half way between Fort Wayne and Indianapolis, but also due to the energy in the community that includes Indiana Wesleyan University, Taylor University and Ivy Tech Marion Campus all in close proximity to this area.

Ivy Tech has supported our efforts with a tower site several years ago which will be used as part of this buildout. Certainly, with these campuses of higher learning, robust broadband is an essential tool for growth of our community and retention of graduates of these institutions.

We expect initially a 20%+ take rate. With the expenditure of this expansion, this early take rate will cash flow the upgrade. Several potential customers have already contacted us from this area wanting our service. We have a very high satisfaction with our existing customers in the areas we serve so our take rate will increase rapidly after deployment. As we finish this project the additional revenue will allow other upgrades within our system. Our organization is not laden with a lot of debt or overhead. There is not a large office staff and overhead to support. The new customers and equipment will not pose a lot of extra time for the company.

These unserved areas need broadband. The two principles have cash flowed the growth and capital expenditures from the start with manageable loans from the Grant County Growth Council and Star Financial Bank along with their own cash inputs. Their growth has been measured by available capital. This grant will allow accelerated deployment for eastern Grant County. Eastern Indiana Wifi Inc. has the financial resources, desire and the capacity along with community leadership support to successfully complete this project. This grant will bring Eastern Grant County areas exposure to the world and will allow farmers, established businesses and budding entrepreneurs the tools to grow and prosper thus allowing all of Grant County to again prosper.